

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

August 1991



The
Christian
view of
human
life



A dangerous, deceptive article

The article by Arthur Patrick in the April (1991) issue of *Ministry* ("Does Our Past Embarrass Us?") has added to the theological confusion that presently divides both laymen and ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the name of progress, this article raises questions about the pillars of our faith, pillars that have been deeply rooted in both history and inspiration. In my 44 years in the ministry I have never read a more dangerous and deceptive article in one of our magazines.—Joe Crews, director, Amazing Facts, Frederick, Maryland.

■ Arthur Patrick refers to "the precious [1888] doctrine of righteousness by faith" and its corruption in the 1890s by Jones and Waggoner. As a corrective he wisely recommends "The Dynamics of Salvation," which was produced by the Righteousness by Faith Consultation of the General Conference and first published in the *Adventist Review* (July 31, 1980). This is a tremendously important document that was allowed to fall between the cracks in 1980 and again in 1988. Sadly, the mere publishing of a document will get by most readers, and if not assiduously promoted by leadership, the message it conveys will probably come to nought.

Many of the differences in soteriology now afflicting us could be healed if this document were to be republished, studied at workers' meetings, presented at camp meetings, and then preached four or five consecutive Sabbaths in the churches with a copy in every member's hand. I have done this and the members loved it and were united by it.

The foundation of our message to the world is to be as an angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 14:6). If we can't come together on the gospel, the very heart of our commission, expect a continuation of our current unraveling on peripheral issues.—Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

E. G. White on polygamy

In his article "Polygamy: An Enduring Problem" (April 1991), Pastor Siron indicated that the Bible does not directly address the question of baptizing polygamists, and suggested that "there can be no genuine reason that we should deny people the privilege of salvation simply because they were polygamists when they heard the gospel." Thus he implied that the Seventh-day Adventist Church should accept into membership practicing polygamists.

Unfortunately the article made no mention of Ellen White's inspired counsel. She states: "God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It is contrary to His will" (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 76). "The gospel condemns the practice of polygamy" (*Signs of the Times*, Oct. 26, 1888). "The polygamy so common in that [Solomon's] time was directly opposed to the law of Jehovah" (manuscript 47, 1898). It is "a violation of the law of God" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 145). Specifically, it is a disregarding of "the restrictions of the seventh commandment" (*ibid.*, p. 81; cf. pp. 337, 338).

Ellen White held this position for the more than 50 years that she wrote on this topic. Why is it that her unwavering position against polygamy has not been seriously considered? I believe that the caring church can, and will, find a compassionate way of dealing with polygamous peoples, while at the same time maintaining the high standards established in the Scriptures as well as in the writings of Ellen White.—Ron du Preez, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Not just in North America

I was impressed to see the report on Shepherdess International in the October (1990) issue of *Ministry* ("Shepherdess International Goes Worldwide"). The Shepherdess club fills a real need in the lives of ministers' wives and can help them to be better adjusted and hence more effective workers.

The article stated that "five years

ago, when the program was in its infancy, only North America had organized chapters." Unfortunately, it seems that some divisions have not been passing along reports. Just for the records, in 1976 a Shepherdess chapter was started in Barbados, West Indies—in the East Caribbean Conference of the Inter-American Division. By 1982 a second chapter was started on another island in that conference—in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Two of the ladies who started the Barbados chapter had previously been members of chapters in Trinidad (South Caribbean Conference), and in Georgetown (Guyana Conference).

I was the sponsor of the Barbados chapter from 1982 to 1985, and presided over the Antigua chapter in 1989-1990.—Gloria Josiah, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Beware of repetition

I have baptized hundreds of Pentecostals as they left Pentecostalism and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The deciding factor in this change was not the day of rest nor the Adventist view on the state of the dead. Rather, it was these words of Jesus: "Use not vain repetitions" (Matt. 6:7).

Repetition is the secret of hypnotism. A repetitious musical beat, repetitious phrases in word or song, and just watching the broken center line on the highway while driving have been known to induce hypnosis.

I attended a celebration service. What concerned me was not just the loud repetitious beat in their music, but the repetitious choruses that were sung over and over again until the audience was moving with the music, arms were upraised, and the pastor was crying out, "Let the Spirit have its way."

We now have all the tools to go full-blown Pentecostal. If we as a church would ban carnival-type music and repetitious choruses from our services, we could avert the threat of becoming Pentecostal.—Harold Kaufmann, pastor, Shelton, Nebraska.

During the past 20 years abortion has proved to be one of the most divisive social issues both in North America and in many other countries. *Ministry* has tackled this subject in the past but in this issue is taking a different approach—publishing an article on the history of abortion in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and, for the first time, a major article on the sanctity of life.

The author of the latter, Dr. Miroslav Kis, teaches ethics in the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He seeks to portray the biblical view of human life. Is it sacred? How does it differ from other forms of life? In what way is it the *imago Dei*?

In tracing the history of abortion in the Adventist Church, George Gainer looks particularly at the tumultuous 1970s, when the United States Supreme Court loosened most of the restrictions on abortion. The reader may be surprised to find how strongly our pioneers felt about abortion.

The General Conference Christian View of Human Life Committee has drafted a statement on abortion and is now preparing to circulate that statement throughout the world for critique. Ultimately each person involved, whether participant, relative, counselor, or onlooker, needs to decide for himself or herself where to draw the line.



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God at work in us

John M. Fowler

One of my favorite scriptures is a promise of divine enabling: "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).^{*} As I was reflecting on this passage recently, it dawned on me that the promise of God's empowering follows immediately an admonition: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (verse 12).

Is there a contradiction between the two statements—the promise and the demand, the enabling and the summoning? Is there a legalistic stance in the phrase "work out your own salvation"? Or is there an attempt to walk the theological tightrope, trying to balance the divine and the human in the process of salvation?

Perish the thought. If there was one truth that was precious to the apostle, it was the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul spent his entire ministry proclaiming that salvation could not come by any other way except through grace, and that the sinner's acceptance before God is not something merited, but always something given. The apostle even bequeathed to the Christian community two whole Epistles—Romans and Galatians—devoted entirely to this good news of God's saving grace. And to the Ephesians he wrote: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8, 9).

What, then, did the apostle mean by demanding that Christians must "work out" their own salvation?

Far from any reference to salvation by

works, Paul's appeal is for a life and a lifestyle consistent with the demands of faith. In effect the apostle is saying: "Yes, you are saved by faith. You are saved by the free grace of God. But you are saved to live. Your faith experience must move from believing to living. You must live out your salvation. That involves a lifestyle of obedience, just like that of our Great Model—Christ Jesus—who obeyed even to the point of

God's grace is at work in the summoning and the enabling.

humiliation and death [see Phil. 2:5-12]. And furthermore, your Christian walk is your personal responsibility; no one else can do it for you."

"Work out your own salvation," therefore, does not mean "Work for your salvation," but "Live a life consistent with the new status of being children of God." As Müller points out: "The believer is called to self-activity, to the active pursuit of the will of God, to the promotion of the spiritual life in himself, to the realization of the virtues of the Christian life, and to a personal application of salvation. He must 'work out' what God in His grace has 'worked in.'"¹

This human responsibility, the apostle suggests, is to be pursued "with fear and trembling." Paul is not referring to any "slavish terror"² of a vengeful master, nor is he concerned about any

frustration in the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose. But he is wary of self's innate capacity for overconfidence or complacency in the journey toward the kingdom. Ellen White warns: "God does not bid you fear that He will fail to fulfill His promises, that His patience will weary, or His compassion be found wanting. Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ's will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life. . . . Fear lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker. Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose that through you God desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life's pathway without His abiding presence."³

In that sense, fear and trembling must accompany the Christian walk, but in no way is there any implication that the journey is to be performed by self alone. "For God is at work in you." The word for "at work" is *energeo*. God is energizing you. God is empowering you. He who has begun a "good work in you" (Phil. 1:6) is now enabling you to finish that work.

This emphasis on God's work in the life of the Christian (1 Cor. 12:6, 11; Gal. 2:8; Eph. 1:11, 19, 20) gives us the assurance that the contours of salvation—the beginning, the continuation, and the culmination—are guaranteed by God's grace to everyone who believes in Him, and walks with Him.

That is the beauty of the gospel. God is paramount in the salvation of man. His grace initiates and His grace completes the redemptive process. "Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings."⁴ For God is at work in us. ■

^{*}Bible texts in this editorial are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹J. J. Müller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1955), p. 91.

²Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), vol. 3, p. 437.

³Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), p. 161.

⁴White, p. 333.



Fewer pastors, more converts?

David C. Jarnes

I'd heard it said one too many times. The line goes something like this: "In the areas of the world where each pastor must care for many churches, we're baptizing many more people than we are in those areas where pastors have only one or two churches to care for." The speaker then directly or indirectly intimates that if we want more baptisms—for example, in North America—we should spread our pastoral force thinner.

Certainly there is some truth to the suggestion that where there are more pastors the laity tend not to be as involved. And where the laity are not as involved there are likely to be fewer conversions. But it is simplistic reasoning to say that therefore one can blame low rates of church growth in a particular area on too much pastoral attention to the congregations there.

Having heard the line one too many times, I decided to see what statistics would reveal. If it were true that too many pastors spoil the soul winning, then those conferences in the North American Division that have more churches per minister should be growing faster than those that have fewer.

From the General Conference's *Annual Statistical Report* for 1989 I determined for each of the 58 local conferences in North America the ratio of ministers per church.¹ Then I ranked the conferences by number of ministers per church, putting at the beginning of my list those with the highest ratio of ministers per church, and at the end, those with the lowest. The list broke down rather naturally into three groups: the first 13 conferences on the list averaged

one or more *ministers per church*, the last 13 conferences on the list averaged two or more *churches per minister*, and the rest fell in between.

Next I compared the gross growth rates, loss rates, and net conversion growth rates of the groups at the beginning and end of my list.² As you can see from the table that accompanies this editorial, the gross growth rate of the group of conferences with the most ministers per church is significantly larger than that of the group of conferences with the fewest. And the net growth rate of the former group is nearly double that of the latter.

The loss rate seems to be the significant difference. The statistics appear to indicate that less pastoral supervision means more members drop out.³

It doesn't hold water

I don't claim that these statistics indicate that more ministers per church will produce more net growth. One of my colleagues in the Ministerial Association says that the statistics simply show that if you depend on ministers for evangelism, you'd better have a lot of ministers if you want much evangelism.

I do believe, however, the statistics show that—in North America, at least—

the suggestion that "the fewer ministers per church, the more the church will grow" doesn't hold water. Actually, many factors enter into the church growth equation: ripeness of the particular area for evangelism, for instance,⁴ and the "nothing succeeds like success" syndrome.⁵

When we jump to conclusions regarding evangelistic success—our own or those of our brothers and sisters in the church—there's no telling where we may land. ■

¹ I based the rate of ministers per church on the figures given for ordained and licensed ministers and churches in each conference. These figures include conference office staff and do not include "companies"—which no doubt has skewed the results somewhat. I think, however, the general picture is correct.

² The *gross growth rate* is comprised of the total of baptisms and professions of faith for the group of conferences during 1989 divided by the total membership of the group of conferences at the beginning of that year. The *loss rate* is comprised of the group's total of apostasies and missing members in that year divided by its beginning membership. And the *net conversion growth rate* is comprised of the group's total baptisms and professions of faith minus its apostasies and missing members divided by its beginning membership.

³ Comparing the half of the 58 conferences at the beginning of my list (those with more ministers per church) with those at the end produced results that were more ambiguous. The gross growth rate of the latter group actually exceeded by a little that of the former. But because the loss rate continued significantly higher for the half with fewer ministers per church, the net conversion growth rates were practically identical.

⁴ The July 11, 1986, *Christianity Today* carried an article entitled "Where in the World Is the Church Growing?" The article said that evangelical and charismatic denominations are growing fastest in South Korea, the Philippines, Africa south of the Sahara, and in Latin America, and are experiencing relatively little growth in North America, Australia, and Western Europe—the same growth patterns we see in our church.

I don't think these patterns indicate that the ministers and members of these other denominations and of our own church in the first geographical group are all more energetic or more dedicated than are those in the second geographical group. Rather, I believe it more likely that these patterns indicate differences in the receptivity of the people being evangelized.

⁵ It's easier to keep oneself and others motivated to do evangelism when it is productive—and thus rewarding. And it's more difficult to do so when great effort produces few results.

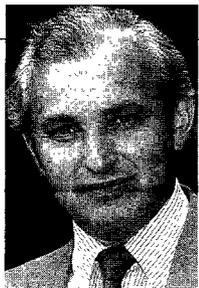
	Gross growth rate	Loss rate	Net growth rate
More ministers per church	4.57	1.61	2.96
More churches per minister	4.28	2.56	1.72

Comparison of the growth rate of the 13 North American Division conferences with one or more ministers per church with that of the 13 conferences with two or more churches per minister.

The Christian view of human life

Miroslav M. Kis

The uniqueness of each human being contributes to the richness of God's creation and warrants the indispensability of each individual.



Miroslav M. Kis, Ph.D., teaches ethics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Playing God—how inconceivable such a proposition is for the Christian mind! People are subject to limitations of time and space; they do not know what is best. Sin has weakened their minds, bodies, and whole beings. Life itself is not their own. Whenever humans assume absolute responsibility over other humans, they usurp divine prerogatives and create tyranny, violence, and oppression. God alone can be trusted with life and destiny. Let God alone be God.

Yet while God alone can be God, He has given people a measure of authority—they are to be responsible stewards of divine properties. Life is one such property, which, though it belongs entirely to God, He has entrusted to us. The Creator asks us to procreate and then to safeguard the fruits for Him. Men and women, then, are not only subject to the laws of life; they also have some control over them.

While people have heard the injunction to procreate, their concern for the fruits of procreation sometimes lags behind. It is the purpose of this article to clarify the Christian view of human life and the extent of our responsibility for it.

What does “sacred” mean?

Christianity views all life as precious, but human life as sacred. This conviction informs and determines the Christian's attitude toward nature and toward human beings. But what separates human life from other forms of life? What

makes human life sacred? And what effect did the Fall have on the sacredness of human life?

According to the Bible, God is holy (Rev. 15:4). His being and His character are essentially and absolutely identified with an undivided and absolute holiness. Scripture expresses this in several ways:

1. Sacredness.¹ Fundamentally, the Hebrew word *qadas* denotes the separateness and otherness of God. God is in no way identified with anything else (Hosea 11:9). His holiness makes Him unique and separate (Ex. 3:5; 19:18, 24); He remains inviolably sacred.

2. Majesty. God's holiness bespeaks His majesty and awesomeness (Ex. 15:1). His majestic presence arouses not only fear and awe (Gen. 28:17) but also wonder and worship (Ps. 96:9).

3. Moral purity. Finally, God's holiness proclaims that there is no sin, evil, or profanity in Him (Jer. 5:16; Heb. 1:13). His actions, His words, His relationships, are flawless and perfect.

So primarily, the word “holy” refers to God, whose holiness is intrinsic and underived.

But God's holiness affects everything that is associated with Him. Time (Sabbath), place (Temple), people (priest), and thing (ark of the covenant) derive their holiness from God.

1. What belongs to God is sacred. He calls the Sabbath “my holy day” (Isa. 58:13); Israel is holy, “a people for his own possession” (Deut. 7:6, RSV); and the temple is “his holy temple,” where He dwells (Ps. 11:4). God's property is sacred and requires respect. Profanation of the Sabbath is a

sin of transgression and trespassing.

2. *What is set apart is sacred.* The people of God are urged to make a clear distinction between the sacred and the profane. When God sets apart priests, a sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, Temple vessels, or a day so that these serve as instruments or ministers in worship or God's representatives, then such people or objects are sacred. When a common person disregarded this distinction and touched that which was sacred, it resulted in tragedy (2 Sam. 6:6, 7).

In the English language the word "life" represents mainly two different concepts:

1. The existential—concrete living in the sense of the duration or manner of life. The expressions "good life," "long life," "hard life," and "quality of life" use the word in the general sense of the Greek *bios*, or existence.

2. The ontological—a more abstract sense by which we mean that mysterious something that distinguishes the living from lifeless matter. When used of humans in this way, we mean the human essence often referred to as the "soul," i.e., a complete human being.

In this article we are generally thinking of the essence, while recognizing the close relationship between the existential and the essential.

What makes life sacred?

From the Christian point of view, what, then, makes life sacred?

1. *God is the author of life and therefore life is precious* (see Ps. 36:9). When God created this planet, He supplied it with light, soil, water, air, and seeds (Gen. 1:3-11). All seed is infused with potential for generation, growth, and reproduction; the Life-giver endowed organic matter with life.

2. *God is the sustainer and owner of life; therefore life is precious.* God did not abandon His creation when He completed His creative work. Scripture teaches that He is an active sustainer of life (Ps. 104:29, 30). Through the laws of nature instituted at Creation and through humanity's stewardship over the earth, God sustains life indirectly. But the Bible underlines God's active and direct involvement, and the total dependence of living creatures on His activity.

God makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall (Matt. 5:45); He gives food to the birds of heaven (Matt. 6:26) and water to the wild animals (Ps. 104:11); not even the death of a sparrow escapes

His knowledge (Matt. 10:29), and even should people disrespect the laws of nature through neglect, destructive violence, or selfish manipulation, the Owner of life visits them with consequences and so calls them to responsibility. Because God sustains life, investing in its every breath and pulsation, life belongs to Him and is precious.

3. *Life is set apart for a special purpose, and so it is precious.* At the time of Creation God established a delicate and well-balanced biosystem on earth. According to Genesis 1:29, 30, green plants grow from inorganic soil and serve as food for animals; fruits and seeds are given to humans for food. Not one organic living thing exists without reason or purpose, nor is any living thing independent of everything else. Yet life's value does not lie simply in mutual usefulness or interconnectedness. Rather, harmony and unity in nature serve as witnesses to the existence and nature of its Creator (Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:19, 20). Because of the divine purpose for their existence, the life in living things is precious.

From this divinely assigned purpose, however, stem limitations of value and, therefore, different orders or classes of life. Respect for life means respect for the originally designated purpose for each category. To use plants, fruits, nuts, and animal life for their intended service often implies the taking of their life. Any use of the lower life (plant or animal) that trespasses the original intent and any use of humans as mere objects constitutes abuse and profanation of life.

What is the nature of human life?

Human beings are part of the life cycle of this planet. They depend totally on this earth's biosystem, and so their lives share in life in general.² But human life stands above subhuman life. The Bible expresses the uniqueness and superior dignity of humankind as the "image of God."

While all of life, including human life, proceeds from God, belongs to Him, is totally dependent on Him, and exists to serve His purposes, only human beings were created in their Maker's image.³ Their reflections of His image, which take various forms, are the very factors that intensify the sacredness of human life and define the meaning of the word "human." We can say, therefore, that sacredness is Godlike-

God is the sustainer and owner of life; therefore life is precious.

ness, a reflection of Him, and that humanness is Godlikeness as well, and a reflection of Him.

Before we proceed with a definition of the various dimensions of the *imago Dei*, some preliminary observations are in order. The Bible teaches that a human being is a whole, a simple being. A person is not simply an aggregation, a complex system of individual parts. The soul, body, and spirit are not independent units masterfully connected, so that one might measure a person's humanity or the sacredness of his or her life on a scale that measures whether or not all of the parts function well or are accounted for (more on this later). Human reason, the will, the emotions, etc., are not simply parts of a whole, but rather, different dimensions of one homogenous being.

Furthermore, femaleness and maleness are not additions or appendages to some kind of generic androgynous primate. Scripture teaches that God created particularity of genders as an integral and original dimension of human beings. They *are* female or male; they do not *have* femaleness or maleness. So at the highest level of life on earth—the human level—there are no classes, categories, or value distinctions. Both male and female humans are equally privileged to reflect God's image.

Finally, when God chose to make creatures in His image, He also decided the limitations of that image. Scripture repeatedly indicates that people both resemble and differ from God. So God is omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-12) and omnipotent (Gen. 17:1), while humans are limited and finite (Matt. 19:26). Yet

God's nature still finds its reflection in the totality of the human being.

In what ways do human beings resemble God? The first two dimensions of resemblance listed below humans share partially with other living creatures. But humans possess them in a more perfect way, thus reflecting the Creator more fully.

1. Individuality and sacredness. God's holiness is expressed by His separateness and uniqueness; there is no other like Him (Isa. 44:6). And humans are like God in that the Creator has granted them the privilege of being different, of being unique.

Human beings are unique first of all in respect to the rest of creation. Humanity's individuality comprises not only physical distinctions from other creatures but also the additional dimensions—mental, spiritual, moral, etc.—unique to humans.

Individuality appears also in relation to other human beings. Physically, mentally, emotionally, and in every respect every human being is unrepeatable, irreplaceable, and the only sample God owns. For that reason human life is sacred.⁴

2. Creatorship and sacredness. God created the first human pair. Scripture carefully sets apart that act from His other creative activities (Gen. 1:26-28).

- A planning session preceded their creation. Their emergence was not a surprise, but rather the fruit of an intentional and deliberate exercise.

- God prepared the earth for their arrival. What He created on the preceding days provided for all of their physical needs, from air to breathe to a home in the garden.

- For their creation God changed drastically His *modus operandi*. While He made the rest of creation by the power of His word, He formed the man and woman with His hands and directly breathed into them the breath of life.

But God did not create only the first couple. Through the powers of procreation given to man and woman, He remains the parent of the whole human race. "In him we live and move and have our being; . . . for we are indeed his offspring" (Acts 17:28, RSV). The Creator shared His powers with humans, thus giving us another dimension of His image.

At this point, however, an important question arises: *What is it in human nature that reflects God as the Creator?*

Certainly humanity's creativity in the arts, industry, and other areas is a partial reflection of God's creativity.⁵ But what of the reproductive aspect of human life? Is it the procreative act per se that reflects His image, or is it the procreative power given to humans in the form of sexual polarity controlled by reason and will?

If we conclude that the procreative act as such reflects God as the Creator, we face a host of problems. Are children, singles, or childless couples deprived of some dimension of the *imago Dei*? Furthermore, does the procreative act in rape or prostitution also reflect God as the Creator? Finally, animals and plants procreate. Are they also then in the image of God?

It seems more appropriate to conclude that sexual powers and male-female polarity as well as humanity's creative abilities reflect God's creatorship ontologically. Whether our use of these powers reflects the way God would use them is a question of our responsibility as intelligent and moral beings. Certainly rape does not reflect the method of God's creative act; rather, it is the abuse of God-given powers. Instead of reflecting the image of God, such an act dims His image.

Human life is sacred because of its God-given powers to create for Him. While the lower creation simply follows instinct, humans must act responsibly, with a commitment to reflecting their Creator.

Uniquely human reflections of God

We now consider the dimensions of the image of God humanity does not share with other living beings.

3. Personhood and sacredness. Human life is sacred because, like God, humans are persons. Animals do not have this dimension. The term *person* is generally defined as "unity of bodily and mental actions in activity."⁶ Reason, will, emotions, memory, intelligence, etc., function as one whole. As a result, human beings have a sense of self in which all faculties act with purpose and in harmony with the decisions of that self.⁷

The Christian God is an absolute and ideal person. Unity and harmony have characterized His personality from eternity. But as creatures, humans only partially reflect the Creator. Though they are maturing as persons from the inception of life until death, their per-

sonhood never reaches its apex. They never achieve that state in which all faculties are fully developed and function in harmony and to optimum capacity. Neither their life span nor the conditions of this sinful world allow that. The Bible points to an open-ended destiny for human personhood, the time when the full potential will be realized under sinless conditions in an endless existence (Eph. 4:15).

But for now, human life is sacred because it is endowed with this ongoing advancement toward a full reflection of divine personhood. The one who hinders such progress acts against the very nature of a person. For this reason, then, human life is to be protected and set apart.

The personhood of humanity also suggests that human life is sacred because it implies that a person has a right to the freedom of expressing the faculties of personhood. Only through the free exercise of his or her faculties can a person grow and stimulate growth in others.

4. Eternity and sacredness. God is eternal and immortal; humans are finite and mortal. Yet even humanity's temporality reflects God's image. At Creation human finiteness reflected the Creator's eternity in humanity's infinite potential and in conditional immortality. With the coming of sin, death replaced immortality, and human potential was suppressed. But though it was suppressed, it was not destroyed. Neither sin nor death has as yet earned acceptance with human beings. Physically, mentally, and emotionally we all function with eternity in view (Eccl. 3:11), and with all our energies, means, and willpower we oppose death. The redemption Jesus Christ made available appeals to this faint yet earnest existential yearning, offering along with eternal life the full restoration of God's image in us.

5. Dignity and sacredness. The expression of holiness in the majesty of God reveals humanity's dignity. Scripture states: "Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:5, RSV). Every human is entitled to respect and honor simply on the basis of his or her status as a human being. This dignity is God-given, and therefore not earned, awarded, or subject to being withheld by humans. It gives us dominion over the lower creation and demands that humans respect other humans.

6. *Moral purity and sacredness.* God's holiness implies His moral purity and perfection; God is a moral being. Humanity reflects this aspect of God's being in its constant yearning and striving for purity and perfection. Human life has a destiny higher, loftier, and nobler than that of other forms of life. This destiny is a call to be "perfect even as your Father . . . in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). For this goal God created humanity; to this end they are committed. Living is essential to reaching this end; therefore life is sacred.

7. *Freedom and sacredness.* God is free. He does what He wants. No one has the right to ask Him "What dost thou?" (Job 9:12; Ps. 115:3). Human beings are born with a desire, even a need, for freedom. Dozens of years in captivity or oppression, even being born in a society in which basic freedoms are denied, cannot accustom a moral human being to existence as a mere machine. Christians view freedom as an essential right of every human being, part of the reflection of God's image. This basic freedom belongs to us by nature as humans, independent of social or legal conditions (Gal. 3:28). And first and primarily this freedom means the right to live; above all else I am free to be.

8. *Spirituality and sacredness.* God is spirit, a spiritual being (John 4:24). This means that God *is* life, He is not just a living being; He is presence, not just a process. He is infinite, transcendent, and changeless, and so He cannot be contained or limited (1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron. 2:6; 6:18).

Created in His image, human beings reflect divine spirituality through their religious dimension. Augustine expressed this essential yearning for God in his prayer, "God, Thou has made us for Thyself, and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in Thee." So religiosity is not a matter of choice any more than breath is optional.⁸

This yearning for communion is not unilateral. Scripture tells us that God also seeks to meet with humans (Gen. 3:8, 9; Ex. 25:8). Life is sacred not only because it is an indispensable condition for communion with God (Ps. 115:17), but also because to fellowship with Him is life's ultimate purpose.

All of these dimensions distinguish human life from life in general and establish the claim that life is sacred. The uniqueness of each human being contributes to the richness of God's

creation and warrants the indispensability of each individual. Dignity points to the origin of humanity and the fact that all people belong to God. Moral perfectibility, procreation, personhood, potential, freedom, and spirituality—all reflect the Creator and together produce a multidimensional dynamic and relational life. God, as a good steward of His properties, secured the safety of human life in spite of sin.

The Fall and sacredness

The Bible states that all humans have sinned and have come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Sin's intrusion into human life produced far-reaching alterations. Even though it manifests itself on the existential level of our life (thoughts, attitudes, words, actions), sin's primary locus is the human heart (Jer. 17:9) and the will (Rom. 7).⁹ It has defaced and almost obliterated the image of God in humanity.¹⁰

In marring the image of God, sin has impinged upon the very content of humanness and sacredness. This raises some serious questions: What is the Christian view of the fallen human life? Must we respect it? In other words, is human life still sacred, or can we consider it to have only relative or perhaps conditional sacredness?

The Christian good news proclaims that in His foresight, God decided to intervene in human history to restore the original full sanctity of human life. Scripture reports two such interventions, one of authority and one of love.

The intervention of authority. A frightful realization dawned upon the first murderer: human life is cheap. It was relatively easy to take Abel's life; it would be just as easy for someone to take his, Cain's. "Not so," said God (Gen. 4:15), and Cain was safe.

After the Flood (which had taken billions of lives), when the earth loomed empty, the continued existence of human life again seemed threatened. Then God intervened. "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:5, 6, RSV).

When, at Sinai, God proclaimed His will, He placed sinful human life under the protection of the moral law (Ex. 20:13). Though His image in humanity

Life is sacred because fellowship with God is life's ultimate purpose.

was defaced and weakened, He shielded it from any attempt at calibrating or ranking its humanness. Over and above the dictates of our conscience and reason, beyond the pressures of culture and expedience, stands the sovereign authority of the Lord of life. To Him all who take human life lightly must answer. Even the most "dehumanized" humanoids claim respect.

Of particular importance here is a comment Ellen G. White made. She stated that a slave who has been "kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash" may hold a lower position than the "brutes."¹¹ Yet, she said, "the slavemaster will have to answer for the soul of his slave."¹²

A human may be forced to the level of brutes, but even then that human is not a brute. And those who perpetrate the crime will have to face a severe reckoning.

The intervention of love. Because He loves the human race, God began a rescue mission with one goal—that of saving human life. This venture, in which He has made an incalculable investment, seeks to restore what sin has destroyed, and to set human life above common, careless treatment. To take human life, or even to abuse or neglect it, is not only a transgression of the explicit commandment, but also subversive to the plan of redemption. Not only did God create the image, Christ has provided for its restoration.

Measuring the soul's value

Because Jesus has died for all, even for those who do not accept His death (1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2), the life of all human beings is precious. It is the cross,

not one's capacities, usefulness, or maturity, that reveals the value of the human soul.¹³

The benefits of Christ's death extend to the little children who have not yet reached the age of accountability,¹⁴ and even to those who are mentally handicapped. A woman bore several children who were mentally retarded because of her husband's drunkenness. Some of these children died, and of them Ellen White wrote that at the resurrection morning the mother will meet them again if she remains faithful.¹⁵

Of two of the living children, she wrote, "[They] will always be children, and will be restored by the power of the great Restorer, when mortals shall have put on immortality. . . ."

"In regard to the case of John, you see him as he now is and deplore his simplicity. He is without the consciousness of sin. The grace of God will remove all this hereditarily transmitted imbecility, and he will have an inheritance among the saints in light."¹⁶

Redemption is the ultimate reason for the sacredness of human life. Whether or not we submit to divine authority, and whether or not we relate to our

fellow human beings in the light of Calvary, only God has a total claim on life, human life in particular. He counts even young children and the mentally incompetent among those for whom the infinite price was paid.

In spite of divine intervention in human destiny, life remains vulnerable. Outlooks that either reject or are indifferent to God's claims compete with the Christian view of human life as sacred. As a result the whims, passions, and pleasures of the selfish human heart control the fate of many. When there is no belief in God as Creator, no concept of His image in humanity, no consciousness that humanity is loved and is being rescued, there is no concept of a future—a destiny—for human life, and therefore no reason to respect it. In this context the Christian church is called to assert the sanctity of human life and to alleviate the suffering that stems from disregard for God's claims.

Christians ought to view human life as a gift given to humans at the creation of the first Adam (man). Procreation is the extension of that original act of creation, and thus it places a heavy responsibility on men and women. ■

¹ The word "sacred" comes from the Latin word *sacrum*, which in pagan religion meant "that which belongs to a god or is in god's power."

² Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), pp. 3, 4.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 313. I prefer a personal pronoun when referring to human life. At no time and under no condition is human life an impersonal "it."

⁴ _____, *Education*, p. 17.

⁵ See V. N. Olsen, *Man, the Image of God* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1988), pp. 54ff.

⁶ Peter Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1981), p. 208.

⁷ To scholastics the center of personhood is in reason. For others it is the will, the conscience, the ego, etc.

⁸ Jacques Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*. To be published.

⁹ See also Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 61.

¹⁰ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1078; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 294; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 595.

¹¹ _____, *Early Writings*, p. 276.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ _____, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 214; *Gospel Workers*, p. 184.

¹⁴ _____, *Child Guidance*, pp. 565, 566; *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 260; E. G. White manuscript 26, 1885.

¹⁵ E. G. White letter 1, 1893 (Manuscript release 1434), p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-9.

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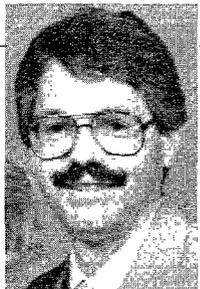
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Abortion: history of Adventist guidelines

George B. Gainer

The story of the church's abortion guidelines tells a lot about where we are in relation to abortion—and why we're here.



George B. Gainer is the chaplain of Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland. This article is a condensed version of a paper presented at the conference on abortion held by Loma Linda University's Center for Christian Bioethics in November 1988.

M

y questions about abortion and the Seventh-day Adventist Church began on a cold day in January 1985. A “chance” encounter with a pastor while searching for parking at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., had led to an invitation to worship with his church sometime.

The following Sunday I dropped in to hear him preach. Arriving late, I sat, unnoticed, in the back. When the pastor stood to preach, he announced to the congregation that it was Sanctity of Life Sunday. After spending some time on the biblical basis for the sanctity of life position, he told the following story:

“During my wife’s pregnancy with our son Seth, we decided to look for a Christian doctor who shared our sanctity of life convictions. So we drove to Takoma Park, Maryland, to the office of Dr. _____, a Seventh-day Adventist. Following the test and examination that confirmed that she was pregnant, the very first question she was asked was ‘Do you want this baby, or do you want an abortion?’ We looked at each other in shock and disbelief. We then turned and said, ‘We are sorry. We must be in the wrong place.’ We got up and left.”¹

At the close of his sermon this pastor invited questions and comments from the congregation. One lady asked, “Are you sure that what you said about the Seventh-day Adventists is true? I always thought that they were Bible-believing Christians.”

He answered, “I am sorry to tell you

that the Seventh-day Adventists are aborting hundreds of babies in their hospitals.”²

While they sang a hymn I went out . . . unseen but not unshaken. What was the truth regarding Adventism and abortion? I remembered seeing an editorial in the *Adventist Review* that stated, “The Adventist Church has no official position on abortion.”³ But what did that mean? Did it mean that the church saw no moral implications surrounding the practice of abortion? Did it really not incline in either direction? What did the lack of an official position mean in the actual day-to-day practice of the hospitals of the Adventist Health System? A search for answers to these questions led me to survey the history of our church’s position on abortion.

Early abortion views

The June 25, 1867, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* contained what apparently was the first statement on abortion to appear in Adventist literature. In an article titled “Fashionable Murder,” the author, John Todd, praised the work of the Physicians’ Crusade—a late nineteenth-century movement against abortion, which had been widely practiced in America during the early part of that century.

Speaking of abortion, Todd declared, “The willful killing of a human being at any stage of its existence is murder.”⁴

The abortion question was again addressed in the November 30, 1869, issue of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Under the title “A Few Words Concerning a Great Sin” the *Review* said, “One of the most shocking and yet

one of the most prevalent sins of this generation is the murder of unborn infants. Let those who think this a small sin read Psalm 139:16. They will see that even the unborn child is written in God's book. And they may be well assured that God will not pass unnoticed the murder of such children."⁵

A *Solemn Appeal* contained the Adventist press's next reference to abortion. James White edited this book in 1870, while he was president of the General Conference. White excerpted a statement from Dr. E. P. Miller's *Exhausted Vitality* for inclusion in the book. The quotation he used reflects the strong sentiments of those physicians involved in the crusade against abortion. Miller castigated abortion as a "nefarious business," a "worse than devilish practice," and a "terrible sin." He went on to say, "Many a woman determines that she will not become a mother, and subjects herself to the vilest treatment, committing the basest crime to carry out her purpose. And many a man, who has 'as many children as he can support,' instead of restraining his passions, aids in the destruction of the babes he has begotten.

"The sin lies at the door of both parents in equal measure."⁶

Kellogg speaks out

What about the "right arm" of the church, the medical work? In his book *Man, the Masterpiece*, published in 1894, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg argued against the idea that abortion was permissible before quickening. "From the very moment of conception, those processes have been in operation which result in the production of a fully developed human being from a mere jelly drop, a minute cell. As soon as this development begins, a new human being has come into existence—in embryo, it is true, but possessed of its own individuality, with its own future. . . . From this moment, it acquires the right to life, a right so sacred that in every land to violate it is to incur the penalty of death. . . . None but God knows the full extent of this most heinous crime."⁷

The statements quoted above verify the little-known fact that historic Adventism was not silent regarding the abortion question. While the church did not directly involve itself in the 40-year battle to legislate anti-abortion statutes in the United States, the evidence shows where these Adventist leaders stood on

the issues that crusade raised.

Ellen G. White did not directly address the issue of abortion, but she did make a number of strong statements regarding the sanctity of human life. For example, she wrote: "Life is mysterious and sacred. It is the manifestation of God Himself, the source of all life. . . .

"God looks into the tiny seed that He Himself has formed, and sees wrapped within it the beautiful flower, the shrub, or the lofty, wide-spreading tree. So does He see the possibilities in every human being."⁸

And in another place she spoke even more directly to the point of protecting innocent human life when she wrote, "Human life, which God alone could give, must be sacredly guarded."⁹

So our Adventist heritage includes both statements that explicitly espouse the sanctity of human life and statements that explicitly condemn abortion. Nineteenth-century Adventism stood in harmony with the previous 18 centuries of Christian thought.

By the 1890s the influence of the Physicians' Crusade had led to the legislation of anti-abortion laws in the United States. This resulted in a cooling of public debate over abortion and began what has been called the "century of silence" on the abortion question.¹⁰ In reality, the "silence" lasted for approximately 70 years. Christian thinking on abortion remained consistent during this period.

Not only was this opposition to abortion to be found in the church; it was also evidenced in society at large. As recently as 1963 a Planned Parenthood pamphlet warned that "an abortion kills the life of a baby after it has begun. It is dangerous to your life and health."¹¹

But by the 1960s the call for abortion rights was sounding with increasing intensity in American society. A movement was begun to repeal the anti-abortion statutes enacted in the nineteenth century.

Pressures on Hawaiian hospital

The years 1970 and 1971 proved pivotal for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's stance on abortion. In January 1970, a bill was introduced in Hawaii's state legislature to repeal that state's abortion laws. Three weeks later the bill was law. Castle Memorial Hospital, an Adventist institution, suddenly found itself needing to establish a position regarding abortion.

On the island of Oahu, Hawaii, only two hospitals were open to the public for maternity or obstetrics cases: Kapiloani Hospital, exclusively an obstetrics and gynecology (ob-gyn) facility, and Castle Memorial Hospital (CMH), the only general hospital that accepted ob-gyn patients. (A third medical institution on the island, Kaiser Hospital, cared only for those people enrolled in the Kaiser Health Plan.)

Because of its unique position of being a general hospital that provided ob-gyn services, CMH, upon repeal of Hawaii's abortion laws, received numerous requests for elective abortions. Requests for abortion were not new, and CMH had permitted what were termed therapeutic abortions—those done to save the life of the mother, or in the case of rape or incest, or even for severe mental anxiety in the mother.¹² But the repeal of all state abortion laws had created a situation for which the hospital was unprepared.

Marvin C. Midkiff, the administrator of CMH at that time, described how the pressure to loosen the abortion policy began to increase: "A prominent man in this community came to me and said, 'My 16-year-old daughter has got herself in trouble. She is in her second month of pregnancy, and I want an abortion for her at this hospital.'

"He brought out a brochure that had been used for fund-raising in this community when this hospital was being planned. The brochure stated 'This hospital will be a FULL-SERVICE HOSPITAL and will provide every service that is needed by the residents of the community.' He brought me the \$25,000 check that he had given toward the construction several years ago."¹³

The pressure on CMH to be a "full-service hospital" by providing abortion on demand began to grow. Midkiff called W. J. Blacker, president of the Pacific Union Conference, and asked for guidance from the church on how to proceed. According to Midkiff, Blacker informed the General Conference (GC) of the situation and then called to tell him that "no one knows of any position the church has taken on it [abortion]."¹⁴

So CMH set an *interim policy*: "In the absence of any decision by our church organization on whether or not we approve or disapprove of abortion, or whether or not we permit abortions in the hospital, our management group has made the decision to permit abortion for

other than therapeutic reasons through the first trimester (three months) of pregnancy, provided there has been counseling by a clergyman, and by two qualified physicians, and written consultations have been entered in the patient's records. I want to make it clear that this is a temporary ruling until such time as a decision is handed down from our church headquarters in Washington, D.C." 15

On March 11, 1970, the GC officers appointed a committee to consider counsel to be given to Adventist hospitals. The thinking at this time was that the church would consider the abortion question in June 1970, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, at the GC session.

On March 17, 1970, Neal C. Wilson, president of the North American Division, made a statement on abortion that was carried by the Religious News Service. He predicted that when the denomination met at Atlantic City in June it would steer a middle-of-the-road course. He said that while the church would steer away from anything that would encourage promiscuousness, the church "would not feel it our responsibility to promote laws to legalize abortion . . . nor oppose them. . . ."

"Though we walk the fence, Adventists lean toward abortion rather than against it. Because we realize we are confronted by big problems of hunger and overpopulation, we do not oppose family planning and appropriate endeavors to control population." 16

Wilson stated that because the denomination was active in 220 different countries, it would have a difficult time taking a hard and fast position on the abortion question. He also said that Adventists might favor abortion in some instances—rape, mental or physical illnesses in the mother, or in cases of probable severe illness in the fetus. 17

On May 13, 1970, after considerable discussion and rewriting, the GC officers voted to accept "suggestive guidelines for therapeutic abortions." (See box, page 15.) The guidelines were of necessity "suggestive" since they were voted by the GC officers and not by the GC Committee.

But the plan to take the guidelines to the floor of the GC session for discussion and a vote was dropped. Some of the medical community felt that the abortion guidelines were inadequate because therapeutic abortions had been performed all along—even before the

repeal of Hawaii's abortion statutes. Marvin Midkiff returned to CMH from the GC session unable to fulfill his promise of bringing with him the official position of the church. 18

Moving toward a liberalized policy

The issue, however, remained alive. The medical community's rejection of the May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines signaled the beginning of serious discussions regarding the feasibility of an open-door policy in Adventist hospitals to abortion on demand.

During the first week of July 1970, R. R. Bietz, a GC vice president, met in Honolulu with Midkiff and A. G. Streifling, chairman of the board of trustees of CMH. In a letter dated July 8, 1970, Bietz relayed the substance of their conversation to W. J. Blacker. The following statements from that letter shed light on the thinking of leadership after the first abortion guidelines were rejected:

"Five or six non-Adventist MDs who patronize Castle Memorial wish to go beyond the present policy of performing therapeutic abortions only. If they are not allowed to do this in Castle Memorial, they will take their patients to other hospitals in the city of Honolulu. If this is done, chances are fairly good that they will take their patients over there for other treatments as well. This could mean a loss of goodwill and also patronage for Castle Memorial. . . ."

"Our own Seventh-day Adventist doctors strongly oppose, except for therapeutic reasons, abortions." 19 This further complicates the problem. If we change our policy, we may have the ill-will of our own men; and if we don't change, we'll be misunderstood by the non-Adventist MDs. Some heavy contributors to the Castle Memorial Hospital feel we should be willing to work in harmony with the laws of the state. In their opinion the community, federal, and state monies have for all practical purposes made this a community hospital. They reason, therefore, that community wishes should be taken into consideration. . . .

"It is important that either the Pacific Union Conference, the North American Division, or the General Conference take a position in regard to this matter. The hospital administration and board need support no matter which direction they might go. *Should the decision be to have abortions beyond what they are doing now, the Adventist doctors could*

"Though we walk the fence, Adventists lean toward abortion rather than against it."

no doubt be satisfied or at least silenced if the administration would have the support of the higher church organization.

"As I see it, the crux of the matter is mostly theological." 20

Meanwhile, at their meeting of July 6, 1970, the GC officers had voted to enlarge the former committee "so as to study what counsel should be given regarding elective abortions." 21 This decision was made in response to a request for further counsel regarding elective abortion. The local members of what was now called the Abortion Problems Committee met on July 20, 1970, to discuss the implications of the issue for the church and its health-care institutions. This small committee also looked specifically at "the viewpoint of our West Coast leaders in gynecology." Finding no solution, the committee recommended further study.

The committee met again on September 25, 1970, and recommended that "the enlarged committee appointed July 20, 1970, be further expanded to make it representative of additional areas of concern and that it be authorized to meet for approximately two days to study the problem in depth, hopefully to develop guidelines that will be useful in bringing uniformity into the direction given our health-care institutions in North America." 22 The committee concluded its meeting with "the expressed hope that due to the urgency described in correspondence from our health-care institutions the expanded committee might meet . . . as early as possible to give study to this challenging question." 23

Chief of staff urges decision

On December 13, 1970, Dr. Raymond deHay, chief of staff at CMH, wrote A. G. Streifling asking that the decision process be expedited. Noting that the deliberations had been going on for some 10 months, he said that was "much too long a time . . . without some answer being communicated to the members of the medical staff of this hospital."²⁴

On December 16, 1970, DeHay wrote a second letter to protest the delay in making a decision, this time to R. H. Pierson, GC president. In this letter DeHay said, "We recognize that Castle Memorial Hospital is a church-operated hospital, but we also feel that you must concede to being at least a quasi-public hospital in the eyes of many local residents."

The chief of staff wrote that in view of the local non-Adventists' contributions to the hospital of time and resources and the state appropriations of more than \$2 million, "we on the Medical Executive Committee feel that perhaps the local public is justified in

requesting total care at Castle Memorial Hospital."²⁵

Noting that the church had no official stand on abortion, he continued, "We have rather reliable information that a number of your West Coast hospitals are permitting abortion which is termed therapeutic but appears to be greatly liberalized as to the actual definition of therapeutic abortion as we in the medical profession have come to understand it over the years. We feel that there is already a precedent for permitting this surgical procedure at this hospital."²⁶

Pierson's response to DeHay (Jan. 5, 1971) defended the May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines, saying, "They are based upon our appreciation for the sanctity of life, respect for the *person image*, and our sense of responsibility for the care of fellowmen."²⁷ Pierson then stated: "We stand ready to assist in making total health care available to all. However, Doctor, we have not conceded to the assumption that total health care includes abortion on demand."²⁸

Pierson then informed DeHay that "a competent committee will be meeting in Loma Linda, California, January 25

[1971], to discuss the matter further."²⁹

And so, one year after the abortion issue had been brought to the attention of the twentieth-century Adventist church, an ad hoc committee convened "to make sure that the cause of truth and humanity are recognized theologically, medically, and philosophically in this large area of concern today."³⁰ Of the 18 individuals named to the "restructured" committee at a GC officers' meeting held on January 6, 1971, 11 were present. Four others were added to these 11, making it an ad hoc committee of 15.³¹

Updating the statement

In his opening remarks, W. R. Beach, committee chairman, reviewed the work of the Abortion Committee, stating that the abortion guidelines of May 13, 1970, had been helpful, but that the rapidly changing situation, especially in Hawaii and New York, made a new and updated statement necessary.³² Harold Ziprick, the head of Loma Linda University's Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, presented a paper entitled "The Abortion Problem



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Today," which showed the complexity of the abortion question. The rest of the morning was spent discussing the numbers of therapeutic abortions in Adventist hospitals [e.g., Glendale Hospital: 1966, 1 abortion; 1967, 3 abortions; 1968, 4 abortions; 1969, 10 abortions; 1970, 34 abortions. White Memorial Hospital: 1968, 3 abortions; 1969, 12 abortions; 1970, 79 abortions].³³ Also discussed were the problems CMH was facing as a result of the repeal of Hawaii's abortion laws.

In the afternoon session Jack Provonsha presented a paper titled "An Adventist Position Regarding the Abortion Problem." He advocated that with each request for abortion every attempt should be made to save both the pregnant woman and the developing fetus, "but if this cannot be achieved and one must be sacrificed, the lower must be sacrificed in favor of the higher human value."³⁴

Following Provonsha's presentation, the committee voted to amend and revise the May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines. The committee concluded its work that day by recommending that the GC officers appoint a committee to give continued study to the issue.

Back in Washington this committee began its work by turning first to the task of amending and revising the old guidelines, but their efforts eventuated in the development of an entirely new document entitled "Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines." This document contained both a statement of principles and guidelines to acceptable "interruptions of pregnancy." A comparison of this document with the papers Drs. Ziprick and Provonsha presented at the Loma Linda meeting shows that their ideas and wording served as primary sources for both parts of the document.

The new document underwent a number of revisions. The statement of principles was composed and then expanded during February 1971. Between February and June the guidelines themselves had at least three different forms. A fourth guideline was added, stating that abortion was permitted "in case of an unwed child under 15 years of age." Later, a fifth guideline was also added, one that permitted abortion "when, in harmony with the statement of principles above, the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value."³⁵ Eventually this guideline was revised to

read that abortion is permitted "when for *some reason* the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value" (italics supplied).

The revisions also included dropping the word "grave" from guideline 2, which pertained to physical deformities

1970 Abortion Guidelines

"It is believed that therapeutic abortions may be performed for the following established indications:

"1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or seriously impair her health.

"2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with grave physical deformities or mental retardation.

"3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

"When indicated therapeutic abortions are done, they should be performed during the first trimester of pregnancy."

1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines

"1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or impair her health.

"2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with physical deformities or mental retardation.

"3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

"4. When the case involves an unwed child under 15 years of age.

"5. When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value.

"When indicated interruptions of pregnancy are done, they should be performed as early as possible, preferably during the first trimester of pregnancy."

Both guidelines say that no person should be compelled to undergo nor physician forced to participate in an abortion if he or she has a religious or ethical objection to it. The 1971 guidelines broaden this to include nurses and attendant personnel.

Between February and June the guidelines themselves had at least three different forms.

and mental retardation, and the word "seriously" in guideline 1.

Why the delays?

The committee then gave to the GC officers, as a "tentative report," a statement that included most of the revisions noted above. But no action was taken, and the Pacific Union continued to apply pressure for a decision.³⁶

Beach gave an insight into why he delayed pushing the statement: "My opinion is that we must avoid opening the door to abortion on demand, but rather keep it within the context of a total philosophy. If I read the literature aright, there is a growing feeling in favor of a more conservative line than that promoted by the liberation movement and adopted, more or less, in some of the states. We need to watch this and make sure that our philosophy is basically sound."³⁷

On June 14, 1971, the GC officers voted to request N. C. Wilson, C. E. Bradford, and R. F. Waddell to serve as a committee to refine certain aspects of the report "Interruption of Pregnancy," submitted by the Committee on Abortions.³⁸

Finally, on July 13, 1971, Wilson was able to write to Blacker that the GC had produced some guidelines: "Please contain yourself and do not become too ecstatic, but at long last we have a report for you regarding the interruption of pregnancy. This is a more sophisticated term than 'abortions,' and since there are therapeutic and elective, we feel that the new term covers the whole spectrum. To be sure, we have not answered every question that can come up, nor

The wording of the new guidelines was "broad enough to interpret any way you chose to."

have we made provision for opening up the door in harmony with certain pressures that are being brought to bear on the medical profession today. We feel it is a fair position and one that we can defend. I hope it will be helpful to you and to our brethren who have been facing the music for over a year now in Hawaii."³⁹

Still, it wasn't until August 10, 1971, that C. E. Bradford, secretary of the committee now called the Committee on Interruption of Pregnancy, released the statement "as the opinion of a representative committee of theologians, physicians, teachers, nurses, psychiatrists, laymen, etc., who met at Loma Linda, California, January 25, 1971,"⁴⁰ with the understanding that the report is to be used as counsel to denominational medical institutions."⁴¹ The statement was subtitled "Recommendations to SDA Medical Institutions." In his covering letter, Bradford made the following observation: "I suppose you would say this is *quasi official*, without the full imprimatur of the brethren."⁴²

So, after more than a year and a half of intermittent committee work and discussion, the Adventist Church still had no *official* position on the abortion question.

Did this mean that CMH was left in the same quandary regarding abortion on demand as they had found themselves in when Hawaii's abortion laws were repealed in January 1970? The answer is no. The wording of the new guidelines was "broad enough to interpret any way you chose to."⁴³ This allowed CMH to open its doors to abortion on demand through the twentieth week (and even later for "compelling

social or medical reasons")⁴⁴ and still be in harmony with GC guidelines.

Continuing confusion re policy

Now the church had a policy, semi-official though it might be. But a flow of confusing and misleading information regarding the church's position began even before the Abortion Committee had finished its work. In March 1971, *Ministry* published two articles on the abortion question. In the first, W. R. Beach concluded "that except in the extreme circumstances listed under our guidelines on therapeutic abortion, it would be better to enhance our reverence for life and the Christian way that leads to it."⁴⁵ He was, of course, referring to the three guidelines that had been accepted on May 13, 1970.

Dr. Ralph F. Waddell, secretary of the GC Department of Health, wrote the second article, "Abortion Is Not the Answer." Calling abortion a "war on the womb," he said, "As Christians we abhor the thought of wholesale carnage on this level. Although we accept therapeutic abortion based on proved medical indications, we do not find abortion on demand compatible with our person-image concepts."⁴⁶ He went on to say that therapeutic abortions should be performed "during the first three months, before the embryo can be considered to possess life in itself."⁴⁷

In this same issue, *Ministry* published the abortion guidelines of May 13, 1970. It is important to remember that this was the March 1971 issue. In Loma Linda on January 25, 1971, the restructured Abortion Committee had voted to "amend and revise" these original guidelines and by the time of publication the new Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines had been written and were in the final revision stage.⁴⁸

A GC officer and member of the Abortion Committee vigorously protested publishing this material. In a March 2, 1971, letter to W. R. Beach, Robert E. Osborn wrote, "It seems to me that the articles are completely premature, or else the appointment of a committee [the Loma Linda committee] to look into the matter in depth is a farce."⁴⁹ Osborn's protest was based on his knowledge that the original guidelines were deemed too restrictive and were being superseded.

Beach defended the decision to publish the articles and guidelines: "In view of the fact that the upcoming report of

the committee which met in Loma Linda will liberalize somewhat the current guidelines, I believe that from a practical viewpoint, it was well to give the rationale for the current situation and the future viewpoints. I think it will be evident that our viewpoint has been liberalized. I feel, however, that this liberalization will be understood and accepted."⁵⁰

But the publishing of the new guidelines, which would have allowed the "liberalization" to be "understood and accepted," never happened. That the older, more restrictive set of guidelines was published and the newer, more liberalized set was not resulted in a great deal of confusion among Adventist clergy and laity regarding the church's position on abortion and its practice in our medical institutions.⁵¹ There is no evidence that leadership attempted to educate the clergy and the church about the new set of guidelines and its implications.

In effect, the church has simultaneously held two positions regarding abortion. The published May 13, 1970, abortion guidelines have presented to Adventist clergy and laity, and to the general public as well, the appearance of a restrictive stance.⁵² And the unpublished Interruption of Pregnancy Guidelines have permitted its hospitals a free hand in this economically significant practice.⁵³

Adventism and abortion

So what is the truth about Adventism and abortion? Is abortion on demand the norm for Adventist health institutions? On this question M. C. Midkiff said, "I believe if you do a bit of research you will find that the majority of Adventist hospitals permit abortion on request."⁵⁴

An explanation the president of Washington Adventist Hospital wrote in a letter to me bolsters Midkiff's prognostication: "The administration, therefore, in good faith, leaves the responsibility of deciding for or against abortion to the physician and the patient, who really are the only individuals who know the full medical situation and consequences of the case."⁵⁵

The American Hospital Association *Guide to the Health Care Field, 1986* lists 12 of the 56 Adventist hospitals in the United States as offering "abortion services," including "a program and facilities."⁵⁶

In summary

Early Adventism published positions in harmony with the Physicians' Crusade Against Abortion, though it was not active in that movement. The church produced its first set of abortion guidelines in 1970, when American attitudes toward abortion had changed and some of the church's hospitals were experiencing increasing pressure from their communities to provide abortion services.

Less than a year after the first set of abortion guidelines was developed, the church revised and expanded it. The resulting liberalized guidelines have allowed Adventist hospitals a great deal of freedom in their abortion practices, a freedom that has resulted in a large number of abortions being performed. Although the church has been hesitant to let it be known, at the present it is clearly not, in either policy or practice, limiting its medical institutions to therapeutic abortions. ■

.....

Three years ago the General Conference Executive Committee appointed the Christian View of Human Life Committee (CVHLC) to review the hospital guidelines on abortion and other issues touching human life, such as in vitro fertilization, euthanasia, and contraception.

The CVHLC drafted a statement that was printed in *Ministry* in July 1990. This statement is now being circulated to a large number of people throughout the world divisions for further refinement. A decision will then be made as to whether the final draft will remain simply a consensus of the committee or whether some higher body such as an Annual Council will ratify it.—Editors.

¹Sermon by Barry E. Wood, pastor, Solid Rock Church, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, Maryland, January 20, 1985.

²*Ibid.*

³*Adventist Review*, Sept. 1, 1983, p. 14.

⁴John Todd, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 25, 1867, p. 30.

⁵*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 30, 1869, p. 184.

⁶E. P. Miller, quoted in James White, *A Solemn Appeal* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1870), p. 100.

⁷J. H. Kellogg, M.D., *Man, the Masterpiece* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Modern Medicine Publishing Company, 1894), pp. 424, 425.

⁸Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 397.

⁹....., *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 516.

¹⁰Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 40.

¹¹John Powell, *Abortion: The Silent Holocaust* (Allen, Tex.: Argus Communications, 1981), p. 92.

¹²Conversation with Marvin C. Midkiff, Oct. 22, 1986.

¹³Marvin C. Midkiff, speech to Kailua, Hawaii, Rotary Club, Jan./Feb., 1970.

¹⁴Midkiff conversation.

¹⁵Midkiff speech.

¹⁶Religious News Service, Mar. 17, 1970, pp. 16, 17.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁸Midkiff conversation.

¹⁹Midkiff remembers one non-Adventist doctor and one Adventist doctor as pushing for a policy change allowing elective abortions.

²⁰R. R. Bietz to W. J. Blacker, July 8, 1970 (italics supplied).

²¹General Conference Officers' Meeting, minutes, July 6, 1970, pp. 70-330.

²²Abortion Problems Committee, minutes, Sept. 25, 1970.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Raymond DeHay to A. G. Streifling, Dec. 13, 1970.

²⁵Raymond DeHay to R. H. Pierson, Dec. 16, 1970.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷R. H. Pierson to Raymond DeHay, Jan. 5, 1971 (italics supplied).

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰W. R. Beach to Abortion Committee, Jan. 11, 1971.

³¹Those present were: W. R. Beach; C. E. Bradford; P. C. Heubach; David Hinshaw, M.D.; C. B. Hirsch; Gordon Hyde; Joann Krause; Elizabeth Larsen, M.D.; R. E. Osborn; Jack W. Provonsha, M.D.; A. G. Streifling; W. D. Walton; N. C. Wilson; Mrs. C. Woodward; and Harold Ziprick, M.D.

The most notable committee member absent was R. H. Pierson, who had declared just 20 days earlier his support for the existing guidelines.

³²GC Committee on Abortions, minutes, Jan. 25, 1971.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Jack Provonsha, M.D., "An Adventist Position Regarding the Abortion Problem," pp. 10, 11.

³⁵Beach said that this guideline would "cover less definitive reasons for any interruptions of pregnancy." W. R. Beach to N. C. Wilson, Mar. 8, 1971.

³⁶W. J. Blacker to N. C. Wilson, Mar. 30, 1971.

³⁷W. R. Beach to N. C. Wilson, May 11, 1971.

³⁸GC Officers' Meeting, minutes, June 14, 1971, pp. 71-218.

³⁹N. C. Wilson to W. J. Blacker, July 13, 1971. The GC officers voted to accept the "Interruption of Pregnancy Statement of Principles" on June 21, 1971.

⁴⁰At Loma Linda University's "Conference on Abortion," November 15, 1988, Dr. Provonsha stated that although his paper's wording was used in the 1971 Interruption of Pregnancy Statement, it was used out of context, and that he did not see or vote on the statement until it was released to Adventist medical institutions as a completed document.

⁴¹C. E. Bradford, Aug. 10, 1971.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Midkiff conversation.

⁴⁴Bietz, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴⁵W. R. Beach, *The Ministry*, March 1971, p. 6.

⁴⁶R. F. Waddell, *The Ministry*, March 1971, p. 9.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸W. R. Beach to N. C. Wilson, Mar. 8, 1971.

⁴⁹R. E. Osborn to W. R. Beach, Mar. 2, 1971.

⁵⁰W. R. Beach to R. E. Osborn, Mar. 8, 1971.

⁵¹A case in point: On April 23, 1987, during a discussion relating to a request from the Ohio

Conference constituency for guidance on the abortion question, copies of the discarded May 13, 1970, guidelines were presented to members of the Columbia Union executive committee as the church's position.

⁵²In their 1984 publication, *A Community Planning Guide for Sanctity of Human Life Sunday*, the Christian Action Council included a "Summary of Attitudes Toward Abortion by Religious Organizations." The Seventh-day Adventist Church was listed in Group 2, as "generally opposed to abortion but would make exceptions in hard cases (e.g., pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, pregnancy leading to the birth of a baby with deformities or birth defects, pregnancy resulting in a severe threat to the mother's health)." (p. 15).

⁵³Since 1971, statements in the Adventist press have continued this confusion. See, e.g., the editorial by Eugene Durand in the *Adventist Review*, "About Abortion," (Sept. 1, 1983, p. 14), which called the 1970 abortion guidelines "the nearest this church came to a stand on the problem." The editorial later listed guidelines 4 and 5 but made no effort to point out why they were added or what they meant.

See also the "Dear Miriam" column in the *Adventist Review* of Sept. 12, 1985 (p. 21). The author said that upon reading a correspondent's letter regarding the church's abortion policy, she "communicated immediately with the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference and discovered that a statement of 'Abortion Guidelines' was drawn up back in 1970 and given to all Adventist hospitals." She went on to imply that "abortions of convenience" in Adventist hospitals were the result of "infractions of guidelines and rules." Apparently the Health and Temperance Department did not tell the author about the second, more liberal, set of guidelines.

But what was perhaps the most confusing statement of all came from the president of AHS/U.S., Donald Welch. On February 13, 1986, in an interview the *Adventist Review* called an "in-depth look at the Adventist health system," Welch said, "The church developed guidelines for hospitals and health-care institutions in regard to abortions back in 1969 [sic.]. Those guidelines strongly discourage abortions. They do allow for abortions in certain cases in which there is medical consultation—several doctors agree that it needs to be done for the health of the mother, and in certain other cases such as rape."

Welch continued: "I will be frank and tell you there was a time when a number of our institutions did quite a few abortions, and that situation led to these guidelines." Whether or not he intended them to be, Welch's statements were misleading, to say the least.

⁵⁴M. C. Midkiff to Bert Haloviak, Oct. 20, 1986.

⁵⁵R. D. Marx to Mr. and Mrs. George Gainer, April 19, 1985.

⁵⁶American Hospital Association, *Guide to the Health Care Field, 1986*. (The *Guide* is based on hospital-supplied reports.)

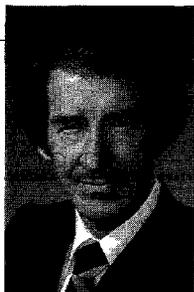
The hospitals listed are as follows: Castle Medical Center, Hadley Memorial Hospital, Hanford Community Hospital, Loma Linda University Medical Center, Porter Memorial Hospital, Portland Adventist Medical Center, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Sierra Vista Hospital, Walla Walla General Hospital, Washington Adventist Hospital, and White Memorial Medical Center.

As to numbers, participants in the "Pastors' Protest Against Abortion" supplied the figure of 1,494 abortions performed at Washington Adventist Hospital from 1975 through July 1982. They said that the medical records office of the hospital supplied these statistics.

Visitation: a dying art?

Rex D. Edwards

The divine-human encounter reveals why the home visit is still an essential part of pastoring.



Rex D. Edwards directs the General Conference Ministerial Association's continuing education and PREACH seminar programs.

David H. C. Read, then chaplain to the University of Edinburgh, gave a vivid description of what a certain ministerial intern considered the ideal building plan for church and manse: "The salient feature was a long, straight corridor with a door at one end leading out of the manse study and a door at the other end opening into the pulpit of the church."¹

Dr. Read called such a "theologically cushioned, isolated study" "a lethal chamber." He continued, "It is a dead word that is carried out along the corridor, . . . not the Living Word, spoken, as it must be, from heart to heart and life to life."² He suggested that "the road from study to pulpit" is not without distractions or interruptions; rather, it runs "out into the noisy street; in and out of houses and hospitals, farms and factories, buses, trains, . . . [and] up between rows of puzzled people to the place where you are called to preach. . . . For the Living Word there is no bypass road from study to pulpit."³

Certainly, a generation ago there was general consensus among ministers and people that such home visitation was an essential part of pastoral care. It was taken for granted that though some might "dread the task"⁴ and even find excuses for not doing it, nevertheless visiting was integral to a caring ministry. The only ones who could hope to earn exemption were a charismatic elite whose preaching was so dynamic and attractive that people would come to

their churches regardless of whether they visited or not.

Other pastors viewed visitation as a means of promoting church attendance, a strategy for pew filling. Congregations seemed in tacit agreement. They affirmed the old saying that "a home-going minister makes a churchgoing people." I know of a pastor who mentally checked out the absences of his people each Sabbath and during the week following set out to round up the scattered flock. If you were away for any reason at all, you could depend on his knock at your door!

But this rounding up of the flock seems not to be a priority now. The traditional hands-on home visit is regarded as time-consuming and even trivial. "The church must be identified with and engage the world." "The church's time should be invested in matching community needs with programs and services staffed and performed by specialists." "The world must seek and find the church where its needs can be met. After all, we have to move with the times; people have changed their living habits. A particular address on a street is not necessarily the place where people can be found."

A changing society

What kind of social world is it with which the pastor must deal today?

1. Wives now are more likely to work outside the home than to be homemakers. According to the National Association of Working Women, working mothers are flooding the workplace. An estimated "63 percent of women with children under 18 have jobs—almost

three times the percentage in 1960." It is further claimed that "of all demographic categories of workers, the fastest growing one is made up of married women with children under the age of 2." And "some predict that by the year 2000, 75 percent of kids will have working moms."⁵

Day-care centers are an established institution. Also, women who have no wish for formal employment are, with remarkable frequency, involved in activities that take them away from home during the day. Modern home appliances greatly reduce the time required for housework.

2. People are working longer hours than they used to. Demographers assert that "the average American works 20 percent more today than in 1973, up from 40.6 hours to 48.8 hours, and has 52 percent less free time per week, down from 17.7 hours per week to 8.5."⁶

Incidentally, flats, condominiums, and apartments are an increasingly acceptable venue for living, especially among the yuppies. These abodes have become glorified dormitories where

their occupants are to be found "home" only in the evenings and on weekends—and even then spasmodically.

Church growth consultant Monte Sahlin states: "In the industrialized nations many people simply have less time to be at home for a house call. The window of opportunity for visiting in homes now consists of weekends and only perhaps two or three hours in the evening. These are also the times when committees must be scheduled, Bible classes taught, etc. The concept of a pastor visiting in the homes from noon until evening is simply no longer a reality. With a decrease in the time available to make visits, fewer visits are made and fewer people get visited. The priority usually goes to 'crisis' situations."⁷

3. The retired and elderly are much more mobile than they used to be. These people, formerly categorized as "shut-ins," are increasingly more mobile and less housebound. Community clubs, senior citizens' associations, and retirement centers offering every conceivable distraction and "dream come true" environment are proliferating.

Their facilities open early in the day and continue into the evening, and some of the elderly come home only to sleep. Further, "many retired people . . . are returning to the work force."⁸

4. In these times, making house calls may be a breach of etiquette. In the early years of this century, tradesmen delivering groceries, meat, milk, and bread called at homes. These purveyors have all but disappeared. Monte Sahlin reflects: "The well-known companies, such as Fuller Brush in the United States, are no longer selling door-to-door. Even Tupperware and Avon have shifted from in-home selling strategies to placing their products through stores. In part this is because of the large numbers of 'not home' results from sales calls, and in part it is a recognition that popular etiquette has changed and it is no longer considered good manners to come to the door of a home without an appointment."

The family doctor who in bygone days could be depended on to come to the house for even minor ailments and at short notice is no longer available. Group practices and medical centers are now the organizations and places where people go for care. Wrapped in the stainless steel of gleaming technology, they offer specialized treatment for every human malady.

If physicians are now considered consultants rather than house callers, why should it seem incongruous for ministers to speak of their studies as offices and to keep visiting hours by appointment! These modern realities of radically changed lifestyle attach less significance to the place of residence.

An outmoded practice?

So what about the traditional pastoral visit in the homes of parishioners? Is it a vestigial remainder of an abandoned ecclesiastical past, now to be discarded because times have changed? Or is there a theological rationale adequate to sustain this practice?

The core of the answer is that we represent a prevenient God—One who goes before His people and anticipates their needs. As biblical faith sees it, the primary movement in salvation is not humanity's search for God; it is God's search for humanity. This thesis forms something of a watershed between the Christian faith and other religions. God is not to be found through intellectual search, nor through mystic exercise. He

The apprentice method

Monte Sahlin

Most pastors today will not be able to make enough house calls themselves to care for their flocks adequately. In *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, Kennon Callahan shows that each week a healthy, growing congregation will make visits equal to 20 percent of its worship attendance. If you are the pastor of a congregation where the Sabbath attendance averages 200, that means 40 visits a week. Callahan observes that half of these visits should be made on members (including inactive members) and half on prospective members (including those who have visited your worship service). His work with more than 400 Protestant congregations during the past three decades clearly demonstrates that any church that achieves this level of visitation will not fail to grow.

Obviously, in order to achieve this goal pastors must involve church members in the ministry of house calls. This cannot be done by delegation alone. Church officers and other volunteers are busy too, and will not make visitation a priority unless they see the pastor making it a priority.

The pastors with the most successful visitation ministries use an apprentice method of training lay visitors. They take volunteers with them on several house calls, and when the volunteers have developed sufficient skill, the pastors encourage them to visit on their own.

Group training processes also work very well, especially when they are done in connection with on-the-job coaching. And to draw optimum results from the visitation program, one must provide continued support of trained visitors. Group sessions serve this end well.

is the God who seeks people where they are.

The figure of speech is not absolute, for the Bible *does* speak of people seeking after God. But when we look into it, this movement of humanity to God is itself based on His initiative. There are so many words that speak of the divine initiative—salvation, redemption, reconciliation, justification. And, of course, the Incarnation is the most powerful sign of God's coming to and being with human beings. God became one of us in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to "visit" His people: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68, RSV).

It is surely not pretentious to make a parallel between the visiting activity of God and that which is done on His behalf by His church representatives. Is not the activity of the church meant to convey what the work of God is like? So the idea of visiting is deeply embedded in pastoral ecclesiology. Indeed, the church's missionary activity finds its validation here. Logically, then, the home visit assumes its own importance and carries its own sanction. Home is still home; it is the special space that people occupy, where in most cases they still "feel at home."

If the church capitulated to the homelessness of modern society, it would be an affront to that which is known about the nature of human beings, biblically and psychologically. The church must affirm humanity's sense of a need of a dwelling place, our need for an address. If it is now more difficult than it was to find people at that address, then we must recognize the plight and make extraordinary efforts to find them where they are. In a pastoral appeal to the clergy of her day, Ellen White wrote, "To my ministering brethren I would say, . . . Reach the people where they are." She went on to say, "This work cannot be done by proxy. . . . Sermons from the pulpit cannot do it. . . . If it is omitted, the preaching will be, to a great extent, a failure."⁹

Disarming their fear

Let's construct a scenario. A minister calls at a strange house. He is not even familiar with the names of the occupants. He may get no farther than the doorstep, but there he learns the occupants' names, and they hear his—and

may even remember it. They can never meet again as total strangers.

It may be that a time of need will bring them together again. Or that first visit may so disarm the fear that the householders had of being visited that they invite the minister inside on his next visit and eventually establish a relationship. People seldom find faith other than through relationships with other Christians. While pastors are not the only ones who can make such a connection, experience teaches us that it is their pioneer visits that make possible the visits and personal involvements of others.¹⁰

A significant hindrance to the visit at the door is that the visitor is often perceived as someone trying to get something. His or her presence could even be considered an invasion of personal space. The "sect" visit is often of such an intrusive nature. Recently two Mormon elders visited me. They were interesting and quite handsome men, but there was absolutely no possibility of a genuine personal meeting. Their agenda required submission to a set of religious beliefs. It was a barrier we could not put aside.

Not infrequently, visiting ministers are viewed in this unhappy light—at least initially. There is a utilitarian association: they have called in order to raise church attendance or, even more commonly, to raise money.

So, in many cases, the coming of the church in visitation has lacked even the appearance of grace. Those being visited have not learned what it is to be accepted with unconditional positive regard—in other words, with no preconditions, no time limit. They have not experienced the church's patience. Dare we say that this has prevented them from understanding God's patience? "The Lord waits to be gracious to you" (Isa. 30:18, RSV). There is no act of grace in which the elements of waiting and patience are absent.

This, of course, does not mean that the visit should make no demand. To make no demand or request of any kind would in the end be an affront, an indication that the one visited was of no account. To ask nothing of a person is to devalue that person. H. H. Farmer, perhaps adapting a phrase from Augustine, frequently said "the demand of God is the comfort of God." But before one is ready for the demand, he or she must experience being accepted for

one's own sake. The one being visited must see the demand the church makes—and so the demand God makes—as arising from something different than an ulterior motive, an attempt to use him or her. That person must see the demand as part of the gracious relationship.

Representing God's love

Lesslie Newbigin writes: "Pastoral visiting represents that loving, caring relationship [of God]. The pastor visits every member of his congregation, however poor and insignificant, not because he is useful for the parish program, or because he is influential or helpful, but simply because he is one of God's children, to be loved and respected as he is."¹¹

This means that all people in the parish—whether they be officeholders, members, or of no affiliation whatever—are to be visited. Ellen White instructed the minister to "visit every family, not merely as a guest to enjoy their hospitality, but to inquire into the spiritual condition of every member of the household. [The pastor's] own soul must be imbued with the love of God; then by kindly courtesy he may win his way to the hearts of all, and labor successfully for parents and children, entreating, warning, encouraging, as the case demands."¹²

Visitation represents God's recognition of each person, whether he or she be well or ill, in good times and in bad times. The minister calls upon the people in the name of God, as they are and where they are. ■

¹David H. C. Read, *The Communication of the Gospel* (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 47.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

³*Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 338.

⁵*9 to 5 Profile of Working Women* as cited in "Lifestyles America 1990s" (a proprietary report provided to clients in January 1991, by Research Alert, New York), p. 13. "Currently, six in ten moms are in the work force—that may climb over 70 percent by the end of the decade" (*ibid.*, p. 57).

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁷In a conversation with the author.

⁸*9 to 5 Profile of Working Women*, p. 79.

⁹White, p. 188.

¹⁰See box, "Visitation: The Apprentice Method," by Monte Sahlin.

¹¹Lesslie Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 39.

¹²Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 347.

Ministry begins at home

John W. Fowler

The pastor's first work is in his own household.



John W. Fowler is secretary of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The Pastor and His Family" is a chapter from his recent book *Adventist Pastoral Ministry*, which was published by the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Used with permission.

The Christian church has historically shown a great deal of interest in the work of the pastor, but it has paid little attention to his relationship with his family.¹ Fortunately, today that is rapidly changing. Most of the major denominations now recognize that the pastor's family is crucial to his work with the church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is no exception to this development. While few hard statistics are available, there is a growing awareness that serious problems are brewing that demand the attention of the entire church. A good deal of research has been done on the problems of clergy families, resulting in the publication of a growing number of articles in various magazines, including Adventist publications.

In 1984 Charles Bradford, then the president of the North American Division, set up a Pastoral Motivation Committee that conducted an extensive study of pastoral ministry throughout North America to discover the major problems that negatively affect pastoral morale. The report touched on four major areas of concern, one of which was the conflicting demands of a pastor's family and his work.²

Past Christian views of marriage

The fact that the church has only recently begun to show concern for the problems of the pastor's family is not surprising in view of the direct identification of the pastor's work with that of Christ and the apostles.³ Christ never

had a family, and, in fact, He said that anyone who followed Him must be willing to leave his family behind (see Luke 14:26).

We find little reference in the New Testament to the families of the disciples. The record suggests that if they had families, they paid little attention to them. Paul, who is usually held up as a model for pastoral ministry, was probably married at one time but later dissolved the marriage. Perhaps for that reason he emphasized the benefits of ministers being single and wished that all men were as he was. He further counseled those who were not married to remain single (see 1 Cor. 7:7, 27).

For centuries the Christian church viewed marriage and family life in a negative light. Says Robert O. Blood, Jr., in his book *The Family*: "The Roman Catholic Church did not fully sanctify family life until the end of the sixteenth century. Before that, the church sanctified only what it labeled the 'religious life,' i.e., the life of priests and monastics who escaped the corruptions of the world, and especially the corruptions of family life with its sexual involvements, to live a pure life of celibacy."⁴

Blood goes on to point out that the medieval Catholic emphasis on the "superiority of 'religious vocations' left family life . . . a mere concession to the weakness of the flesh."⁵ Only in the modern era did the church at large begin to recognize the sanctity of the family. However, the Roman Catholic Church still views family life negatively for those whose lives are committed to full-time ministry.

The scriptural model for the pastor is the elder rather than the itinerant evangelist.

Adventists trace their roots back to the Methodist Church, whose view of family life for ministers was quite similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church. John Wesley often identified the work of the pastors with that of the itinerant ministry of Christ and the apostles. As a result, Methodist ministers were urged not to marry. In fact, Wesley himself did not marry until he was 48 years old, and then only after much soul searching and rewriting of his views of ministerial leadership. Even then, he felt that family life must not interfere with his work for the church.

Wesley's biographer records that even though Wesley did marry, he made it very clear that his marriage should in no way affect his ministry. After his marriage he stayed a few days to settle some business, then headed out on another itinerary. His defense is seen in the following words: "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God to preach one sermon or travel one day less in a married than in a single state."⁶

Paul as a pastoral model

If we model pastoral ministry today after the apostle Paul, or after pastoral leadership patterns in the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, or early Adventism, we have little basis for building strong clergy families. That model of ministry requires extensive evangelistic travel and living out of a suitcase, with often a trailer or a motel room serving as the home. This concept of ministry makes heavy demands upon the time and energy of the pastor-evangelist, allowing little time to build a meaningful family life or to cultivate lasting friendships, and there is no church family to provide the support the pastor's family needs. Sometimes the itinerant pastor-evangelist works in an

indifferent, if not a hostile, environment that lacks the support system needed for a healthy family life.

Paul's ministry would never have been conducive to a satisfying family life. A review of his lifestyle helps us to understand his attitude toward the marriage of itinerant ministers. In the following passage he appears to compare his ministry with that of others, which suggests that his model of ministry was not exclusive to him:

"Are they servants of Christ? . . . I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28, NASB).

We obviously have a serious problem if we take the apostle Paul as a model for pastoral ministry. However, when we recognize that the scriptural model for the pastor is the elder of the New Testament church rather than the itinerant evangelist, the picture changes. Here we can discover scriptural guidance regarding the pastor's family that fits well with a balanced theology of pastoral ministry.

The New Testament elders, also called bishops, had a considerably different role from that of the itinerant evangelist. First of all, they were stationary. While they may have traveled a little as evangelists, their basic ministry was to one congregation. Paul makes very clear in his letter to Timothy that elders were to be married. Many expositors interpret the phrase "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2) as strong encouragement for the pastor to have a family.

The Bible suggests not only that he should be married, but that having children is in order, for it says that an elder must rule his family well (see verse 4).

In fact, in his theology of family ministry, Paul holds up the pastor's family as a model for the church, particularly in verse 5 (see also 1 Peter 5:3). From this it is evident that a pastor's family should be his first concern. If he fails here, he is likely to fail in other areas of ministry as well.

E. G. White and the pastor's family

While the Seventh-day Adventist church through the years may not have given proper attention to the pastor's family, or recognized its role in his ministry, we cannot attribute that faulty concept to Ellen White. Years before the church officially accepted the apostle Paul as a model of pastoral ministry, Ellen White expressed concepts that, had they been understood, would have corrected church leaders' misconceptions of the work of the pastor and his family. She made it very clear that the pastor's home should be his first field of ministry: "Nothing can excuse the minister for neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. The spiritual welfare of his family comes first."⁷

She goes on to point out that the minister's family must preach an effectual sermon to his congregation,⁸ and she makes an insightful statement regarding the importance of the home over public ministry: "The world is not so much in need of great minds, as of good men, who are a blessing in their homes."⁹

Revealing research

The pastor's family, then, must be his first concern. Unfortunately, that view is still not strongly affirmed by many Adventist Church members, nor is it understood by a great many pastors and their wives. A recent survey revealed that churches hold up a far different set of priorities before their pastors: (1) church work, (2) time with God, (3) health, (4) wife, and last, (5) children.¹⁰

An article on pastoral motivation by Roger Dudley, Des Cummings, Jr., and Greg Clark indicates that pastors' wives are particularly troubled over the church's failure to recognize the importance of the pastor's family. The result is a negative impact on their husbands' ministry. Of the pastors surveyed, 34 percent felt that they might not meet the approval of their superiors in the conference office; 21 percent hoped to be promoted to some other form of ministry; 26 percent were disturbed by the

faultfinding and criticism of members toward them; and 58 percent sometimes felt lonely and isolated in the ministry. Another 28 percent sometimes felt they would like to leave the pastoral ministry, and 33 percent had discussed the possibility of a transfer with their wives.¹¹

Research suggests that the wife is the most neglected member of the pastor's family. Her most basic problems are a sense of guilt, loneliness and isolation, not enough time for the family, concern for finances, a sense of personal inadequacy, criticism by church members, concern about conference approval, and getting along with church members.¹² A similar list of problems is found in the book *What's Happening to Clergy Marriages?* by David and Vera Mace. They list the concerns of pastors' wives as time alone together with family, confusion regarding their role, friendships outside the church, and privacy.¹³ These problems paint a rather disturbing picture of the pastor's wife, who often feels alone and frustrated.

The Maces identify 19 problems in clergy marriages, which they classify in three major categories. First, they say, "clergy couples are almost obsessed with the feeling that they are expected to be superhuman and to provide models for the congregation and the community."¹⁴ Second is a lack of privacy,¹⁵ and third is the time pressure that constantly assails the pastor and his family.¹⁶ Because of the extremely important role of the pastor's family in the life of the church, these problems must be addressed.

The pastor's family a model

The Scriptures indicate that the pastor's family is central to his ministry and crucial to his success. Family life is important because it explains the meaning and purpose of life. At the very center, and undergirding the very essence of life's meaning and purpose, is one's relationship with God and his fellow man. That is the summation of the commandments. Jesus said that the first great commandment is love for God, and the second is love for our fellowman.

Loving relationships, then, are the object of Christianity. The Christian minister's privilege and responsibility is to proclaim God's love for man and His plan to help his people to love God and their fellowmen. Our love for each other

is God's primary means for revealing His love, His power, and His goodness to the world. David and Vera Mace point out: "A married minister can therefore be reasonably expected to provide in his own marriage relationship an image and example of how other people, through their united love for God, can grow in the quality of their love for each other."¹⁷

Conversely, if a minister's marriage fails to demonstrate these warm and tender relationships, if his religion does not work in the closest of all human relationships, how can those he serves be sure that love is real and that such relationships are possible?

Does this mean that there can be no tension or conflict within the pastor's family? No. The challenge of the pastor's family is to show how love can mitigate those conflicts. The pastor and his family can demonstrate how this deepest of human relationships can bring meaning and purpose to life.

Martin Luther was happily married to Katherina von Bora. However, there were still tensions and conflicts. Luther admitted that family life was demanding, and he talked of marriage as "a school for character."¹⁸ There was conflict over the family budget, stress with the bearing and rearing of children, and the burdens that Mrs. Luther herself had to bear. Martin worked to alleviate those burdens as best he could. On one occasion his neighbors saw him hanging out diapers. When they laughed, Martin exclaimed, "Let them laugh. God and the angels smile in heaven."¹⁹ This is truly an expression of Christian love.

The Mormons obviously believe in the importance of family life as an expression of faith. Says Ben Patterson: "To be married, procreate, and parent is to be engaged in the activity of God Himself. Mormon bumper stickers that read 'Families are Forever,' are taken as literal truth. The family embodies the purpose and meaning of both this life and the next."²⁰

The pastor's first priority

We hear criticism of the family and family life these days, particularly by some of the more outspoken feminists and feminist groups. However, even today most people recognize that the family is the basic building block on which our society rests. Says Ellen White: "Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families

"To be married, procreate, and parent is to be engaged in the activity of God Himself."

make it. Out of the heart are 'the issues of life'; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences."²¹

The condition of society is but a reflection of the condition of its homes. A change in the nation's homes will sooner or later be reflected in a changed society. This is also true of the church. The family is its basic building block, and the condition of the church reflects the condition of its families. Thus, we quickly recognize the importance of the pastor's family. Obviously his first work should be with his own family. That is the very essence of his ministry. If his family is weak, his ministry will be weak. This is why a minister's family is his most important responsibility.

I am sure this is what Paul had in mind when he told Timothy that an elder must have well-disciplined children (see 1 Tim. 3:4, 5). God's original plan was for the home to be the children's first educational experience. They are to be taught both the theory and the philosophy of life, and how to practice those principles in their home life. Thus, "the family . . . [is] the greatest of all educational agencies."²²

If it is true that the home is the means of communicating the essence of Christianity, of bringing meaning and purpose to life, then it follows that a well-ordered family is a powerful evangelistic agency. To quote Ellen White again: "It is no small matter for a family to stand as representatives of Jesus, keeping God's law in an unbelieving community. . . . One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached. . . .

Sexuality is a metaphor of our incompleteness as spiritual beings.

The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered and well-disciplined family."²³

If the pastor is the builder of his church, and if in the building process he neglects the basic building blocks, then the structure of his church is sure to be faulty and the building itself weak. Thus the basis for building a strong church is the pastor's own family.

The place of sexuality

Sexuality is another significant reason that marriage is so important for the pastor. The Scripture says that it is not good for man to live alone (see Gen. 2:18). The biblical model for marriage is two people of the opposite sex joining together as one person. Thus sexuality also has to do with the deepest meaning and purpose of life. William Collins, an associate chaplain of Harding Hospital, has said: "Sexuality has become depersonalized and depersonalizing, a commodity that sells anything from TVs to bar soap. It has become an expression of modern man's desperate attempt to mimic intimacy in a world of increasing isolation and fragmentation."²⁴

Pastor Collins points out that in spite of "all the sex manuals, surrogate partners, and commercialism, sex still remains an expression of the whole human personality."²⁵ This truth grows out of the biblical concept that through marriage man and woman become one flesh (see Eph. 5:31, 32). Sex reveals not only our incompleteness, but also our profound need for the other sex. The woman was created from a piece of Adam's rib. The rib was not replaced; rather, the wound was closed up with flesh (see Gen. 2:21).

The point is that we were created with

a part of us missing. We are, in ourselves, incomplete. "Sexual love . . . is one of the many ways in which we seek to reunite with our 'other half,'" thus integrating male and female characteristics into one total personality."²⁶

Sexuality is also a metaphor of our incompleteness as spiritual beings. In sexuality we find spiritual meaning and purpose only through someone other than ourselves. Sex speaks of our separateness from God and our need to reunite with Him. Marriage is not only an illustration of our separateness from God, but an appeal to reunite with Him. While some religions suppress sexuality for fear it will destroy or distort our awareness of the sacred, just the opposite is true. We need to respond to sexuality within marriage with our whole being in order to better understand and appreciate the sacred relationship we are to have with God.

The pastor as a human being is incomplete without union with the opposite sex. This is a powerful argument in favor of the pastor having a family. It also underscores the importance of the pastor placing a high priority on his family as a part of his ministry. An unhappy, unfulfilling marriage will almost certainly hinder his relationship with God and the church. However, the more meaningful his relationship within his family, the more meaningful will be his relationship with God, and the more effectively will he be able to communicate the meaning and purpose of life with all its awe, wonder, and sacredness to his church.

We noted earlier that the medieval Catholic Church emphasized the superiority of religious vocations and left family life as a mere concession to the weakness of the flesh. However, with the beginning of the modern era came a major shift in the attitudes of both Catholics and Protestants. From its former position in front of the porch, the marriage ceremony was brought inside the sanctuary. Robert O. Blood, Jr. points out: "With marriage as a sacrament came new emphases in the relationship. Marriage was idealized in itself, not just as part of a larger family life. The 'marriage' of Christ and His church became the model for husband and wife."²⁷

While employing organizations and local churches must provide understanding and an adequate support system for clergy families, the key to changing the

circumstance of the pastor's family is the pastor's family itself. The greatest problem appears to be the family's poor listening and communication skills. Poor communication is usually at the basis of all relational problems.

Fortunately, it is possible for the members of the pastor's family to learn how to cope with the problems they face, and to find in family life the happiness, the needed meaning and purpose for their life, that they so desire. Good, strong families aren't born. They are made.

Advantages of clergy families

Perhaps we should recognize that clergy families enjoy many advantages that couples in other careers miss. The following list was given by clergy couples themselves:

- Being called of God to serve Him in a special capacity.
- Having a singleness of purpose in our lives.
- Surrounded by the love of Christian friends.
- Living within the circle of God's will.
- Encouragement and support for continuing emotional and spiritual growth.
- Opportunity to work as a team on tasks of eternal significance.
- A strong sense of purpose and mission in life.
- A wonderful opportunity to live the life of grace in the power of the Lord.
- A constant challenge to live up to high ideals.
- Being part of a loving fellowship of believers.
- Satisfaction of helping people in the very best way they can be helped—finding God's love.
- A people-oriented vocation that really has the answers.²⁸

These are surely advantages to be cherished. Every clergy family may not experience all of them, but many of them can be a part of every pastor's family ministry.

Ann and Hal Schroer list the following strengths of clergy marriages: "(1) The events of the day are shared with a common point of reference, (2) the wife is not left out of her husband's world, as in the case of most other professionals, (3) both are often involved together in the same tasks, with the same goals, (4) less 'fragmentation' of life—all the pieces can be 'put together.'"²⁹

In conclusion, the key to a successful clergy family is unity between husband and wife. David and Vera Mace give the following fine counsel to pastors and their wives: "As a united couple, you will have a secure base. You will not have to expend energy and time in anxious efforts to manipulate each other, in struggling to clear up misunderstandings, in nursing grievances, in keeping up petty deceptions, in struggling with painful and exhausting conflict. It is highly gratifying to reach a point at which, although there will still be differences and disagreements that generate anger and pain, you know how to deal with these situations and clear them up quickly and effectively as they arise. From this secure base you can turn outward to face the world, knowing that you stand together and support each other. Now you are able to fulfill your vocations, to give the service to others to which you have committed yourselves."³⁰ ■

¹ Ministry's policy is to use inclusive language. But the book from which this article was excerpted did not. Please excuse the male-oriented language used here.

² 1984 report of Pastoral Motivation Committee, North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

³ A. G. Daniells, *The Church and Ministry* (Riversdale, Jamaica: Watchman Press, 1912), p. 26.

⁴ Robert O. Blood, Jr., *The Family* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 106.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ John Telford, *The Life of John Wesley* (New York: Hunt and Eaton), p. 254.

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 204.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Roger Dudley and Carole Luke Kilcher, "A New View of the Pastor's Wife," *Ministry*, June 1981, p. 29.

¹¹ Roger L. Dudley, Des Cummings, Jr., and Greg Clark, "Morale in the Ministry: A Study of the Pastor as a Person," *Ministry*, December 1981, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³ David and Vera Mace, *What's Happening to Clergy Marriages?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), p. 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

¹⁸ Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: New American Library, 1950), p. 234.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁰ Ben Patterson, "The Pastor's Family," *Leadership*, Fall Quarter 1981, pp. 43, 44.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 15.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.

²⁴ William Collins, "Has Sex Lost its Mystery?" *The Harding Report* 5, No. 2 (1986): 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁷ Blood, p. 106.

²⁸ Mace, pp. 118, 119.

²⁹ Ann and Hale Schroer, *The Christian Ministry*, July 1971, quoted in Mace, p. 119.

³⁰ Mace, 119, 120.

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- The Holy Spirit and evangelism
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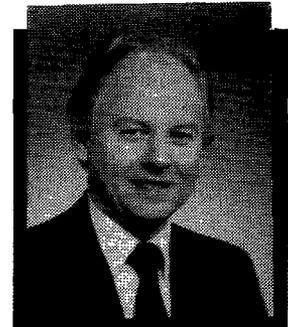
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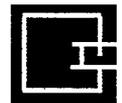


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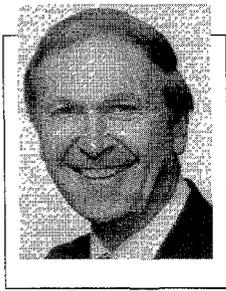
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Husband-wife team ministry

Floyd Bresee

The Bible tells us precious little about husband-wife team ministry. Aquila and Priscilla seem to be our only New Testament models, and we don't know much about them. But since the two-by-two concept was so basic to Jesus (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1), and since financial reality dictates that we will usually translate two-by-two as husband and wife, it's time we learned more about this kind of team ministry.

(I apologize for—in this article—always addressing pastors' spouses as women. Men whose wives are pastors have situations different enough to deserve separate treatment.)

Most ministers' wives fall into one of five categories:

1. *The resister.* Her husband may have changed careers after their marriage. Or, if she did once dream of the ministry, her dream has become a nightmare. Her husband seems to have more love and certainly more time for the church than for her. She sees the church as her competition.

2. *The spectator.* She feels the ministry is her husband's calling and not hers, and wishes she could be treated like any other member.

3. *The partisan.* This wife is willing to do anything her husband or church expects. Her commitment is commendable, but she's become a nonperson.

4. *The manager.* Stronger and possibly more gifted than her husband, she tends to run both him and the church.

5. *The partner.* This spouse represents the vast majority of pastors' wives. She's dedicated to team ministry, but in a way

that fits her unique spiritual gifts and present situation in life.

As we define it here, team ministry occurs when pastor and spouse find cooperative ways, fulfilling to both, of ministering to their parish—whether the pastor's spouse spends much time or little in this ministry, and whether or not she gets paid for it.

Working wives

Precise statistics are not available, but we have probably come to the place where the church must realize that the majority of Adventist pastors' spouses around the world work outside the home and church. If she is secularly employed and/or if she has small children, the pastor's wife can spend only limited time working for the church.

A congregation's acceptance of their minister's wife, however, depends more on her attitude toward them than on the amount of time she works for them. If her circumstances don't allow her to spend as much time in team ministry as she would like, she can make up for it by being highly visible on Sabbath morning.

I recently watched a minister's wife ministering in the foyer between Sabbath school and church. She greeted the people, befriending them and leaving them smiling. Now, that isn't everyone's gift, but the wife who finds some visible way to minister on Sabbath will show the congregation she cares and is a part of the pastoral team. And it may take no time beyond what she spends in church already.

Helpful husbands

The wife who works outside the home holds down three jobs: homemaker, workplace employee, and partner in team ministry. She likely works longer hours, un-

der more stress, than her pastor-husband. It is unfair of him to share the rewards of her employment and team ministry if he's unwilling to share the responsibility of homemaking. This thought is a little shocking in some cultures, but any culture that changes to accept her working must change to accept his helping.

My father came from a European culture transplanted to a Dakota farm. Men and women both worked in the fields, but only women worked in the house.

Dad was a pastor. After he and Mother raised their children, she went back to teaching school. I was a little surprised and pleased to see that, when she went to work, he began helping with the dishes and doing more around the house. I remember his deciding, "Nobody should have to make a double bed alone. It's inefficient."

Some pastors, however, are going to the other extreme and becoming regular babysitters while their wives work. On a recent overseas trip, a union president and treasurer came to me wrestling with the possibility of paying ministers' wives a stipend just for staying home so the pastors would get out and do their church work.

One pastor's wife couldn't get her husband to take the time to talk about a significant problem. Yet she knew he found time to talk with others. So she borrowed a friend's apartment and, using an assumed name, made an appointment with the church secretary for the husband to pay a pastoral visit to that address. She got the visit. And he got the message!

Team togetherness results from time togetherness. Successful husband-wife team ministry requires time for recommitment to your spouse, your ministry, and especially your Lord. You'll love the work of the Lord when you love the Lord of the work. ■

The Blessing

Gary Smalley and John Trent, *Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1986, 238 pages, \$15.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Clarence U. Dunbebin, associate superintendent of education, Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Staunton, Virginia.*

Life has its paradoxes. As children we long for the adulthood that liberates us from parents, yet we want their approval and acceptance. The authors of *The Blessing* believe we can enjoy both experiences.

Smalley and Trent capture the essential elements of the Old Testament blessing, identifying and picturing its variations. The authors also relate modern, real-life stories about men and women who suffer because they did not receive a childhood blessing from their families.

The book outlines five necessary elements for the blessing: (1) a significant

touch—a hug, kiss, laying on of hands, etc.; (2) a spoken message; (3) attaching “high value” to the one blessed; (4) picturing a special future for the one blessed; and (5) an active commitment by the one giving the blessing to fulfill it.

The Blessing gives us a simple but challenging message: family members yearn to know they are valuable and needed, and they deserve such acknowledgement. The authors fill each chapter with insights and illustrations useful for teachers and pastors. Two of the chapters describe homes where no blessing exists. Two others tell how family and church can give the blessing.

Both authors are skilled counselors. Smalley, a nationally known speaker and writer, specializes in family matters. Currently president of Today’s Family in Phoenix, Arizona, he holds degrees in psychology and theology. Trent works with Smalley as associate director. He has a doctorate in marriage

and family counseling and a master’s degree in theology.

The book gives guidance in creating the kind of supportive climate called for by the Project Affirmation Valuegenesis study. I recommend *The Blessing* for pastors, counselors, teachers, and parents.

Developing Faith in Young Adults

Robert T. Gribbon, *The Alban Institute, 4125 Nebraska Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20016, 1990, 102 pages, \$11.95 plus \$2.95 postage, paper. Reviewed by Alice Willsey, director of student finance, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.*

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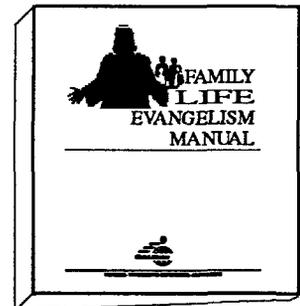
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Produced by the General Conference Ministerial Association in cooperation with Creation Enterprises International.

Should churches of every size establish a youth ministry?

What can the average church do for and with young adults?

This short, concise volume addresses these and similar questions. From his extensive experience in campus and youth ministries and his research with the Alban Institute, Gribbon presents a reasoned approach to the issues of faith development in young adults. He outlines basic principles for the church to follow during this process.

Gribbon does not present a programmatic schedule of activities. His concern is for the ordinary congregation that cannot provide a specialized staff or programs for young adults. Personal contact and opportunities for church involvement and socializing remain the most important tools.

The book reviews current findings and theory on faith development as it relates to the 18 to 35 age group. Research shows young adults tend to leave the church during their developmental process. Studies also indicate a tendency to return to church life eventually. Gribbon feels that understanding this process will allow church leaders to respond more constructively to young adult needs.

The book includes an extensive bibliography and references for further research. Pastors and lay leaders will find *Developing Faith in Young Adults* a valuable book, as will parents who find their children's seeking years a traumatic experience.

Disappointment With God

Philip Yancey, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, 260 pages, \$14.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Daniel R. Guild, retired pastor, evangelist, and church administrator.

When I receive *Christianity Today* in the mail, I look to see if it includes an article by Philip Yancey. If it does, I read that article first. When I heard that Yancey had written a book that won three awards, I purchased it immediately.

Disappointment With God is Yancey at his superlative best. The book's subtitle, *Three Questions No One Asks Aloud*, introduces his theme: Is God unfair? Is God silent? Is God hidden? Anyone who has ever asked these questions and hasn't received adequate answers must read this book.

With these three questions in mind,

Yancey sets the stage in the first section, "God Within the Shadows." Taking his readers through the entire Bible, Yancey examines disappointment with the Old Testament's God the Father; then with the Gospels' God the Son; and then with God the Holy Spirit, of the Acts and the Epistles. He gently answers the questions about a God who seems unfair, silent, and hidden.

In the second, concluding section of the book, "Seeing God in the Dark," Yancey reveals in thundering tones why a God who seems unfair doesn't explain,

why a God who seems silent doesn't intervene, and why a God who seems hidden doesn't reveal Himself.

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